

TREATMENT OF SCOTTISH HISTORY

193

in favour of the Catholics. The laws against them in Scotland were so severe that justice demanded their mitigation,¹ but, as in England, the King aimed at something more than toleration, and to carry out his policy he had to change his ministers and coerce those who ventured to oppose it. William Douglas, first Duke of Queensberry, was Lord Treasurer, and had been for some years considered first minister. No man had been more trusted by James whilst he was still Duke of York. He was now suspected of promoting the anti-Catholic riots which took place in Edinburgh, and was not disposed to turn Catholic himself. The two Drummonds, James Earl of Perth, who was Chancellor, and John Earl of Melfort, the Secretary of State, were not men to stick at such trifles. Both had abjured their creed, and had for some time been plotting to overthrow their rival. "Duke Queensberry", said Perth to the King^ * was an atheist in religion, a villan In friendship; a knave In business, and a traitor In his carriage to him/ ² This was effective : In February 1686 Queensberry lost the treasurership and, Instead, was made president of the Council. In June he lost that post too.

William Douglas^ third Duke of Hamilton, was more compliant than his kinsman^ but even he would not go as

far as the King desired. In February 1688
James asked
him whether he would support the repeal of the
penal laws
and tests, demanding a positive answer In
three days.
Hamilton declined to pledge himself. ' I have
been ever
and am still of the opinion that none should
suffer for
conscience sake and that every peaceable
subject should

¹ See A. Bellesheim's History of the Catholic Church in
Scotland, trans-
lated by D. O. Hunter Blair (4 vols. ; 1887-90].

² Hist. MSS. Coxnm., Hamilton MSS. (1887), p. 171.